

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/817,588

Examiner

Ruth C. Rodriguez

Applicant(s)

UEHARA ET AL.

Art Unit

3677

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 10 March 2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 6 and 11-14.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 - * Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ✓ 6. ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
- ✓ 7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
- ✓ 8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Michael Leonard on 23 March 2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 6, line 12 "the" (first occurrence) has been deleted.

Claim 6, line 13, "the" (first occurrence) has been replaced with --a--.

Claim 8 has been deleted.

Claim 9 has been deleted.

Claim 12, line 12, "the" (first occurrence) has been deleted.

Claim 12, line 13, "the" (first occurrence) has been replaced with --a--.

Claim 13, line 1, "claim" has been replaced --claims 6 or--.

For claim 6, Chao discloses a buckle comprising a socket, a plug and a bridge. The plug has a tip end to be inserted to the socket and to be released from the socket by pressing from both sides of the socket. The plug having a base formed on a base end. At least a pair of lock arms extends from the base to the tip end of the plug. At least one guide bar disposed between the lock arms. An engaging part is formed on a

part of the lock arm to be engageable with the socket. A pressing part is disposed at a part of the lock arm to be pressed when the socket is release. The bridge connects the parts of at least the pair of lock arms and extends around a tip end of the guide bar.

The tip end of the guide bar is located on the side of the tip end of the plug relative to the both ends of the bridge and the bridge extends around the tip end of the guide bar at the central part thereof without contacting the tip end of the guide bar. Chao fails to disclose that the central part of the bridge is bent in a direction away from the base of the plug to extend around the tip of the guide bar. Accordingly, it would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to have the central part of the bridge being bent in a direction away from the base of the plug, instead of being bent towards the base of the plug as disclosed by Chao, so that the central part extends is located towards the tip end and avoids the insertion of material between the two lock arms.

Regarding claim 12, the same limitations of claim 6 apply to claim 12. Claim 12 also claims that the both ends of the bridge are located on sides of the base end of the plug relative to the pressing part instead of claiming that the central part of the bridge is bent in a direction away from the base of the plug to extend around the tip of the guide bar. Accordingly, it would not have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to have the both ends of the bridge being located on sides of the base end of the plug relative to the pressing part, instead of being located at the tip end side of the plug relative to the pressing part as disclosed by Chao, so that

the bridge will provide additional resistance force against accidental disengagement of the lock arms.

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Kasai (US 4,672,725), Saitou et al. (US 5,806,152), Anscher (US 6,311,374), Van Tassel (US 6,487,761) and Japanese Patent Document 06125803 A are cited to show state of the art with respect to a plug with a bridge connecting two locking arms.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ruth C. Rodriguez whose telephone number is (571) 272-7070. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 07:15 - 15:45.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, J. J. Swann can be reached on (571) 272-7075.

Submissions of your responses by facsimile transmission are encouraged. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-6640.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Art Unit: 3677

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Ruth C. Rodriguez
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3677

rcr
March 24, 2006

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Daniel P. Stodola". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

DANIEL P. STODOLA
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600